

THE HOSPITAL WORLD.

THE ROYAL HOSPITAL FOR DISEASES OF THE CHEST.

The progress of scientific knowledge affects not only the treatment of disease but the buildings in which disease is treated. Amongst other things it has revolutionized our ideas as to the environment necessary for the tuberculous patient. It is within the memory of the writer that the Royal Hospital for Diseases of the Chest, City Road, E.C., was provided with double windows, and the patients regarded somewhat in the light of hothouse plants, which a breath of cold air would cause to wilt and fade. Now as one journeys down the City Road one notes the wide open-air balconies thrown out in front of the hospital, filled with patients, who, if it happens to be a visiting day, wave a gay adieu to their friends who pass out of the hospital when time is up.

So, in the days gone by, every possible care and attention was given to the patients hopelessly ill, and in an advanced condition of phthisis, as, of course, is always right; but little or no thought was given to the ever-increasing army of infected persons who filled up beds in hospital wards as quickly as they were vacated by those removed by death. And so the steady stream poured into the consumption hospitals, and the plague was not stayed. Now we know that the first essential of the consumptive patient is cool, pure, fresh air, and that a most important branch of the work of the hospitals receiving such patients is to get into touch with "contacts"—those who have lived in close proximity to infection and may have contracted the disease. This is really the hopeful side of the work of to-day. By this means the recently infected are brought under medical observation and care when the disease is in its early stages and may be checked or cured, instead of their being undiscovered, untreated, and at last brought to hospital only when it is obvious that their days are numbered, and the possibility of alleviating the pain and weariness of those last days alone remain.

The Royal Hospital for Diseases of the Chest has rendered excellent service to the community for nearly a century, for in two years' time it will celebrate its centenary, and the Council and staff of the hospital will certainly add to its laurels by their recognition of its duty, as a special hospital, to provide training for medical officers of tuberculosis dispensaries and sanatoria, and for general practitioners. This has been rendered possible by the

generosity of an anonymous donor, who, fully realizing the value at this juncture of affording facilities for such training, has enabled the authorities to build an entirely new out-patient department, equipped with all the details for research work, and scientific instruction on modern lines, with special accommodation for a tuberculosis dispensary, also a lecture hall, an operating theatre, and a waiting hall. Further, the hospital is to be a special training centre for tuberculosis nurses.

A special room is allotted for the use of the Medical Officer of Health, and there is a very complete system for keeping the records of the cases, so much so that Sir William Osler, who presided at the opening ceremony last week, and was most enthusiastic over all he saw, expressed the opinion that the methods of filing cards which has been instituted might be adopted as a model throughout the country, and seem to solve the problem of the tuberculosis dispensaries under the Insurance Act. For unquestionably these dispensaries should be associated with the hospitals in the different districts, and by the system of records adopted at the Royal Chest Hospital the full notes of the case of each patient and a record of those who have been brought in contact with him can be filed together and any individual case can be easily turned up at any moment.

THE NURSING DEPARTMENT.

Most interesting to the readers of the JOURNAL is the scheme for the training of tuberculosis nurses formulated by the Matron, Miss M. S. Rundle, to which we referred at some length in our issue of October 12th, which has been sanctioned both by the Council of the Hospital and the Medical Council, and which won Sir William Osler's warm approval. Sir William is one of those who appreciate the importance of the work of nurses, and, in connection with the campaign against tuberculosis, expressed the opinion: "Our work is useless unless the nurses are going to be specially trained to help us," and in the course of his opening remarks as Chairman, he said that he was glad to hear that the hospital was making arrangements for the training of nurses in this special work, for the nurse took a most important part in the campaign against consumption, and it was essential that she should be specially trained for it.

Here, then, is an opportunity for rendering social service of the very first importance if nurses will appreciate its significance and qualify themselves for it by taking this or other courses which may be established.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)